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Examiner: Ricky D. Shafer
Group Art Unit: 2872

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-48 were in the application as filed. Claims 23-48 stand withdrawn pursuant to a requirement for restriction, but remain in the application.

Claims 7-19 stand objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's early notification of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-6 and 20-22 stand rejected, and claims 1-22 stand objected to. In this paper, claims 1, 2, 5-7, and 20-22 have been cancelled without prejudice, and claims 3, 8, and 23 have been amended. New claim 49 is claim 7 rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claims 2 and 5-7. New claims 50-54 have been added.

Applicants believe the amendments made herein add no new matter. Any amendment to the claims which has been made in this Amendment and Response, and which has not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to be attached thereto. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1 and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,109,586 to Hoek. The rejection is traversed.

Claims 1 and 20-22 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection is moot as to claims 1 and 20-22. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 20-22.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,416,191 to Lang et al. The rejection is traversed.

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection is moot as to claims 1 and 2. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 2.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 2-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has allegedly unpatentable over Hoek '586. The rejection is traversed.

Claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 have been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the rejection is moot as to claims 1, 2, 5, and 6. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended, and now depend from new claim 49. Claim 49 comprises claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 rewritten in independent form, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Thus, claims 3 and 4 are allowable.

Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-6, and the allowance of claims 3 and 4.

Claims 1-22 stand objected to allegedly because claim 1, lines 9-10, include the phrase "the base bracket." Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice. Thus, the objection is moot as to claim 1. No claims remaining in the application contain the phrase "the base bracket." Thus, Applicants request withdrawal of the objection.

New claim 50 disclose an exterior vehicle mirror system comprising a base, a frame, a connection, and at least one reinforcing element. The base has a mounting post and a mounting portion for mounting to a vehicle. The frame has an opening through a portion thereof, and is adapted to support a reflective element. The connection pivotally mounts the frame to the base through the coupling of the post with the opening. The at least one reinforcing element is integrated into one of the base and the frame for bridging the connection, and for distributing stresses imposed on the frame through the connection to the base along a stress path coextensive with the at least one reinforcing element.

Houk '586 does not disclose the structure called for in claim 50. Hoek '586 discloses a pivot connection having a plurality of spaced inserts 94 positioned in segment-shaped spaced recesses 96 formed in a portion of the mirror base comprising a pivot connection. The inserts 94 act as bearings between the base and the frame for supporting the reflective element. The inserts 94 engage spaced recesses 84 in a frame member to resist external lateral forces applied to the frame, and position the frame relative to the base when sufficient lateral force has been applied to pivot the frame relative to the base. Hoek '586 does not disclose a reinforcing element which bridges the pivot connection, and distributes stresses imposed on the frame through the connection to the base along a stress path coextensive with the reinforcing element.

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Lang '191 similarly does not disclose the structure called for in claim 50. Lang '191 discloses a three-dimensional support element for supporting a reflective element in a vehicle mirror housing. One portion of the support element is adapted for coupling with a base element to form a pivot connection. A reinforcing element is not disclosed in Lang '191.

For these reasons, claim 50 is patentable over both Hoek '586 and Lang '191. Since claims 51-54 depend from claim 50, claims 51-54 are patentable over both Hoek '586 and Lang '191. Applicants request the allowance of claims 50-54.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, all claims remaining in the application are allowable over the prior art. Early notification of allowability is respectfully requested.

If there are any remaining issues which the Examiner believes may be resolved in an interview, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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